unc plug

Prologue

Imagine for a moment, if ye may, that **you've opened your eyes for the very first time in your life**.

You look around you as the raging red intensity of a towering and dimly-lit cathedral invokes a sense of mystic dread within your spiritual psyche, echoing a Renaissance art style which preceded you and your family by 500 years, on a continent that you couldn't even *consider* thinking about affording to visit now, **even in the most patriotic of imperial dreams**, where your labor and identity are valued enough that you were able to **reclaim** a fair amount of **your time** from the **legalized indentured servitude that you were coerced into** by way of a natural birth.

Of course, you don't consider that you've skipped the entire natural process in which your physical body developed, and you don't consider that **the structure you're in was designed with a specific malevolence embedded inside**.

You don't consider that you could be in a domain of evil forces, but of course, you *can't*, because the **paradigm you seek** *has yet to become*.

As your eyes start to regain clarity and your focus improves, you take a closer look at the walls of the cathedral, which have been painted in strange dark hieroglyphs and mysterious images designed to assert omnipresence within your mind. It's dark inside this hall that you believe to be your home, *but you don't know why*. You just know that you've been told this is your home, so you believe it to be true, and that prophecy fulfills itself.

You reposition yourself on the floor and get comfortable while you try to reason how you ended up in the situation that you're in. You don't know what any of it means, but you hear chatter from afar. You would investigate the chatter, but you're bound to the ground by a force you don't understand yet. It's a real force, because **you can feel it in the very depths of your soul**.

You've been here for a long time, it's true. But **here hasn't always been *here***. Here was once there, and they were one place, but natural forces over the course of the planet's evolution pulled that place apart and into two sides of the world, and as life evolved and grew more complex, it came to understand all of those places on each side to be separate places, and then we came to understand those places to have **formerly *been one place* that *became* separate places**.

The chatter grows louder sometimes as you mind your own business, and sometimes you see people pass through the cathedral, but they usually pay no mind to you, unless you do something they don't like, in which case they reprimand you through corporal punishment or psychological torture to remind you that **you are not at the table**.

Sometimes you hear screams coming from afar. The screams sound a little bit different than your screams, and some of the people that you've seen in the cathedral look different from you sometimes. In a lot of cases, those screams are terrifyingly worse than what you're familiar with.

You wonder what it's all about, and **then the spiritual dam breaks**.

The light in the cathedral comes on. It's a gradual shift, not an instant switch, though there are moments where the light's intensity increases faster than others. There are times when the light gets shut off for a moment. The **continual confusion in the cathedral** regarding the status of the light and the common awareness within the cathedral creates a cataclysm of chaos, and loud messages play at all times over the loud speakers of the cathedral, telling you millions of different messages at all times of the day, with varying levels of credibility, ethicality, morality, and any combination or lack thereof.

Naturally, **many of those messages are hateful in nature**, and **the common folk who are tied to the ground start to turn on each other** based what little they can decipher in this dark hall. **The folks at the table sit and chat and drink their fancy drinks and execute a different moral and behavioral ethos than those on the ground, laughing while the lamps atop their table provide them ample awareness of the situation you're in**.

Some of the **ground folk** fist fight the **table folk**, and you're drawn to help them, but the cathedral's security is well-equipped and quickly tame the ground folk. **Some ground folk try to *reason* with the table folk**, and **occasionally** the table folk feel the human emotion of empathy and **allow the ground folk to** speak up and **earn the illusion that they're making progress**, but **progress is slow**, they say, and **that allows them to control the pace at which those rights are distributed to the ground folk**.

Eventually **the light's intensity increases so much** on the table top that it starts to trickle down onto the ground, and the ground folk collectively begin to understand that **they aren't so different from each other after all**. Generally speaking, **they all want the the same core things out of life: true peace and prosperity for all people**, the ethos that is inscribed into the walls of the cathedral, **but so *hastily ignored* by the table folk**. They may have different ideas about reaching the destination, but **that destination is the same**. **The table folk make sure to remind the ground folk as often as possible that they are imagining a fake scenario inside of their minds.**

Regardless, the **ground folk continue to speak up**, in various forms. The light is now shining through the entire cathedral, and the true inscriptions on the walls and the true nature of the

structure of the cathedral have started coming to light. The disturbance is getting too difficult for the table folk to handle, and they are forced to listen to the ground folk and level the playing field.

They go around the ground floor of the cathedral, one by one, asking each individual how they believe the cathedral should be executed.

A **rural farmer-turned-businessman with a long ponytail and traditional influences in his fashion** may understand that he **is part of a wide array of peoples that were once spread throughout the entire continent but systematically displaced**, if not worse, and **he may demand that all of his peoples**, including the remaining peoples descended from different Indigenous societies, **have their own sovereignties and can live on their traditional lands in the ways that they decide they want to live**, but *the table folk laugh*.

A **philosopher mixing drinks in Philadelphia** may understand that she **is part of a nation of people who once lived lives embedded within illegal slave trade, that stretches from her city down to the Caribbean islands and across the deep south of the United States**, who are **similar to her in either origin or culture**, or **both**, and that that influence is **derived from the cultural fusion of English settlers trading enslaved humans from various different cultural and ethnic nations in Africa**, but *the table folk laugh*.

A **medical student born to legal immigrants on the west coast** may understand that **they exist in the closest thing that we have to a global democratic neo-empire** in the form of a blended **Asian**, **Pacific**, **Indigenous**, **African**, **Latino**, and **European** nation stretching from **Los Angeles to Alaska** that **is very wealthy** and **puts progressive politics at the forefront** to push humanity forward, and **no longer can be limited by forces beyond its control**, but *the table folk laugh*.

An **oil worker in the southwest** may understand that he **is part a nation of people like him who prioritize God**, **labor**, and **family** above all other things, and **want to enact policy that will reward the fruits of their pre-Colombian ancestors' labor legacy**, but *the table folk laugh*.

One by one, **the ground folk make their claims on how the cathedral should operate**, to varying levels of debate from the group as a whole. Sometimes, the **head of the table** will agree with the points made from the ground folk, and sometimes the table folk will actually take action to please the ground folk. Of course, **it's an artificially-slowed and controlled process**, and this angers the ground folk who understand that **we do not have time to waste**. The time finally comes, and it's time for you to speak up.

A crude **caricature** of a failed businessman sits at the head of the table, **mocking you up and down to your face** and **then telling you a bigly big lie that *he*'s the only one who cares about *you***.

"*And you, red-headed stepchild… we love our red-headed step children, don't we folks? How should **we** run **our** country, hick?*"

The red-headed stepchild of the cathedral, a suppressed creole nation of **mountain folks**, descended from **displaced Indigenous peoples who built the foundations of regional folk knowledge**, **freed Black Americans** who brought **spiritual**, **musical**, and **linguistic influence**, **Scots-Irish subsistence farmers** united **against tyrannical government**, and **a kaleidoscope of emerging voices from all over the globe**, stands up and **breaks free from the chains that bound it to the ground**.

"**Appalachian Spring**."

Appalachian Identity

> *"If you call it apple aysha, I'll throw an apple atcha." - **Unknown***

Can you feel that sweet mountain spirit down in your veins?

Does it flow through your heart like a mountain range?

Can you feel the atmospheric friction churning up above?

Can you feel a fierce and unrelenting force of nature, one deep inside the very depths of your soul that you know to exist, but can't fully articulate the true meaning of yet?

> *"I come from the mountains where the fountain full of Mountain Dew." - **geonovah***

Appalachian Spring is a name that I've accidentally reappropriated from an unrelated 1940s ballet of the same name, and it refers to a **decentralized**, **sociopolitical**, and **cultural movement** based in loosely-defined **naturalistic** and **neo**-**primitive eclecticism** that began rising in the 2010s.

The **Appalachian Spring** movement, along with an **emerging** and **continually-fluctuating ideology** that I've deemed **Appalachianism**, began in portions of various American states, **centered around the south-central portion of the Appalachian Mountains and the rugged terrains and landscapes that surround the mountain range**. The epicenter of the movement pulses near the confluence of **Kentucky**, **West Virginia**,

Tennessee, **North Carolina**, and **Virginia**, and the culture's prevalence reaches spots in **Ohio**, **South Carolina**, **Georgia**, **Alabama**, **Maryland**, **Pennsylvania**, and **New York**, and arguably as far west as Arkansas, which is now recognized as a separate-but-related group known as the Ozark people.

The **generation-transcending movement** is primarily is centered around a **collective pride in a modern reclamation of Appalachian identity**, which many have come to misunderstand as homogenous when viewed through the American lens of race. It's true that modern Appalachia is heavily populated by descendants of European settlers, but it's explicitly *not* true that a hypothesized **State of Appalachia** is an ethnostate.

The **Appalachian identity being reclaimed** is a **unique and complex mix of cultures** that has become **one of many beautiful Post-American nations who have been artificially suppressed by the empire which governs them all**, and **has culminated in a growing flame** that I believe **the empire will become unable to stomp out**.

Let me explain.

The Appalachian identity as terminology is relatively new. While **Indigenous people have lived here for thousands of years**, and **people from Europe and Africa have lived here for about 500 years**, the Appalachian identity *itself* was **developed out of a perceived *lack* of identity within the region**.

The story of the Appalachian people **begins with its Indigenous peoples**, who did a lot of the hard work of **exploring the uncharted land**, **learning the nature of it**, and **developing societies that function** within such a mountain range as the Appalachian Mountains. There were **many different Indigenous societies** across all of the Americas before European settlement, and unfortunately there's a lot of information that's been lost to time, so some of it we can only try to fill in the gaps on.

The consensus is that **hunter-gatherers from the Great Lakes region migrated south through modern-day Pennsylvania and into West Virginia and beyond**. The Iroquois, or **Haudenosaunee** in their native tongue, are speakers of a shared Iroquoian language that still remain, and are primarily concentrated in the Great Lakes region in Canada, but their historical land claims included much of the central and northern parts of modern day Appalachia.

Historians believe that the society of the **Cherokee people** developed as off-shoot settlements of Haudenosaunee migrators, but an alternative hypothesis states that the Cherokee had long been in the area and that the shared language developed first in the southern part of the range before spreading north. Regardless, the **incomplete historical record of the Indigenous peoples of Appalachia**, and the continent at-large, **provides a foundation for understanding** and in some cases extrapolating the way the land shaped the identity of the people that live on it.

The **Appalachian Mountains** themselves are among the oldest in the world, and they exist as part of **a broader range that once extended across the supercontinent that our current continents split from** millions of years ago. In fact, when you use a terrain map to put together

the continental puzzle, you can clearly see how the range extends up into the northeastern parts of Canada and into Europe.

The **geological ages of the Appalachian Mountains** are the exact reason why, compared to the Rocky Mountains, they are much smaller and more rounded at their peaks. Science has shown us that natural forces have withered down and spread out the mountains over time, **making the Appalachian identity centered around both the mountains *and* the smaller rolling hills that make up the range as a whole rather than just the core of the range that drives a lot of the region's tourism industry**.

The **ancient mysterious nature of the range**, combined with the **spiritual** and **animistic mindsets of many of the Indigenous folks living on them**, gave rise to a **built-in mythology** that would go on to **shape the land and its inhabitants through many generations of time** and **varying stages of technological development**.

The **first Europeans in the range** arrived as Spanish-sponsored explorers in the 1500s, and from my understanding, utilized the land to temporarily contain the **enslaved humans** they **imported from Africa**. Meanwhile, the **Cherokee people**, who had themselves **developed well-functioning societies separately from Europe**, began to interact with European settlers as more folks came from **Great Britain** and **Ireland**.

The **Cherokee and European cultures began to influence one another**, sometimes by force and less often by a shared kind nature between different peoples. The Cherokee and the European settlers **learned to interact with each other** and **their cultures began to merge.**

The **Tsalagi language of the Cherokee people** was either developed from a vocal tradition into a written script for the first time, or introduced to the western world for the first time as an already-existing written tradition, by a **Cherokee man named Sequoyah**, who became a notable **Appalachian founding figure** through **his work in preserving the identity of his displaced nation** and **cultivating the Indigenous roots of Appalachian culture**.

Around the same time, a population of ***too* displaced**, **paranoid**, **poverty-stricken** and **smitten**, **religious subsistence farmers on a rough** and **unforgiving landscape**, were **growing increasingly mistrustful of their government**, the monarchy of Great Britain.

In an age where news and information traveled at a far slower pace, a trickling down of **progress and opportunity** gradually occurred, and **the promises of cultural development inthe form of the free expression of individual identity quietly and then ferociously disrupted the entire fragile fabric of global society**.

The first western Europeans to arrive in the Americas were the elites, naturally, because **they had the means within that economic system to do so**. Kings and queens of ruthless

absolute monarchies were the sponsors of these voyages that led to the accidental rediscovery and subsequent radical transformation of humanity.

Among the many following waves of world immigrants to the Americas was that group of farmers in the northern extremes of Great Britain and Ireland. These poor **Scots-Irish** families, desperate for a way out of their broken-down living conditions, hopped on some ships and **risked everything** to make their way across a dark and freezing ocean.

Much like the rest of the immigrants, **they set out with good intentions**. They wanted **independence** and **freedom from monarchy**. They wanted to **live their lives the way that they saw fit,** in a **place they could call their home**, and **develop new identities bases on the new ideas** that would inevitably spring from such an **enormous fusion of cultures and communication**. They wanted to start a **new nation that adhered to the principles of democracy**, so that *everyone* had a fair shot to **make a better life for themselves and their families**.

And so they tried. They often arrived in the Americas by way of what became modern Boston and New York City, and many of them settled in those cities, but **many of them sought a new land**. They weren't the first ones to arrive at the *new* land, no, they were **somewhere in the middle of those waves**. The entire continent had once been claimed by the people native to it, and then by the time the Scots-Irish immigrants arrived, the coastline had already been stolen by the English imperialists. Anglo settlers had **begun to venture into *those* parts of landmass**, which they had dubbed **backcountry**.

The **Scots-Irish root of Appalachian culture** was planted in the form of subsistence farmers looking for land they might feel familiar with, and they first settled in the mountainous terrain of central Pennsylvania. It wasn't until a so-called **Whiskey Rebellion** that proto-Appalachians in the hills **took up arms against the newly-formed federal government of the United States** for administering new taxes on their beverages. The **fallout of this rebellion caused a migration of these proto-Appalachians down into** the core region of Appalachia.

It must be noted that at this time, **Kentucky** and **West Virginia**, as well as **Tennessee**, were within the "legal" boundaries of the English states of **Virginia** and **North Carolina**, respectively, **whose political systems were dominated by elites on the coasts and immoral plantations**. Many of the elites, as they traveled inland, **brought with them enslaved humans from Africa**, planting the **Black roots of Appalachian culture**. The range was understood to be an **ever-expanding natural barrier to the Anglo world and the Indigenous world**. It wasn't until a combination of these **Scots-Irish migrators** from **Pennsylvania** and **English colonists** from **coastal Virginia**, **began migrating through the Cumberland Gap** and **into present-day eastern Tennessee** and **Kentucky**, that **new English settlements arose on the other side of Appalachia**, and by that point **other nations in western Europe had already begun invading and exploring** the middle part of the continent.

Regardless, **they maintained an ethos alongside their neighbors** in these rapidly developing settlements: **independence** and **sustainability free from government oppression**. The residents of **Kentucky County, VA** formally **petitioned for independent statehood from their regime of Virginia** after the empire was born, and the county in **North Carolina** that became **Tennessee followed soon after**.

The new Appalachian ethos grew to ring true throughout *all* of America.

The vision that willed those state-sponsored men, who deemed themselves pioneers, **through a land that had already been charted**, **by peoples they subjugated**, **was based on the appropriated imagery of mountain folks** and the **rugged**, **live-off-the-land mentality** that had now characterized multiple nations who developed separately but were brought together by forces *that were beyond their control*, and **those forces instill in us that**:

We are a people, not bound by an artificial imperial construct known as race, but **by a metaphysical connection to the mountain range herself**, *to whom we belong*. **We are**, in a sense, **protectors of a vast and magnetic spiritual domain** that the empire never actually stopped sniffing its own farts long enough to understand the complexities of her land by **learning from the folks that were native to it**.

We are a people who understand that **land and nature are sacred**, even if we have different reasons for believing why that is so, and **we live our lifestyles in a variety of manners that utilize the land in ways that work for us**.

We are a people who hold close to us the standards of **honesty**, **labor**, **integrity**, **equity,** and **justice**, because **in all of our different human lenses through which Appalachia experiences herself**, **we have historically understood struggle to be a universal element**, *especially* within the range, and that much like the echoes uttered by brilliant Black leaders and revolutionaries that inspired me, **we do believe that human beings should be judged by the contents of their character**, while also understanding that *even within that mindset*, it's **undeniable** that **individuals are so heavily shaped by the societies that raise them**, and **the lifetimes of trauma that so many communities face should be discussed and rectified** as often as possible without artificially devolving into hatred.

There *are* exceptions, just like in any demographic, but **those exceptions get misrepresented** *often* and **on purpose**, and **more Appalachians are starting to take a peacefully intolerant stance against intolerance itself**.

To me, this is indicative of a **healing society within the wider context of a crumbling empire**. It shows that we are becoming unafraid to take stands for what we **know is right**.

That being said, as a people who are primarily of European descent with enough bits of those other cultures thrown in to substantially influence the wider culture, **Appalachian individuals**

will continue this rising tide and **continue amplifying the marginalized voices who need to be heard**, and **continue listening** and **developing awareness** based on our **neighboring coordinates on the spectrum of human experience.**

We **choose** to not tolerate hate by **collectively using democratized knowledge from affected parties to peacefully deconstruct the language in which hate tends to form and spread in the modern world**.

I truly believe that **love always wins**, and I truly believe that **Appalachia is a place filled to the brim and overflowing with love**, but it's also a place that has been manipulated by forces much larger than it, and **we've lost ourselves in the chaos**...

> *"And no matter where I might roam, these hills and hollers are my home. I've got that sweet mountain spirit down in my veins." -* ***Alan Johnston / Del McCoury***

Appalachian Exploitation

> *"How many boys could they haul off this mountain? Shoot full of holes cuffed and layin in the streets? Til we come into town in a stark ravin anger looking for answers and armed to the teeth?" -* ***Tyler Childers***

An **unspoken imperial civil war rages in guerrilla combat**, with **patterns of systemic and uncontrolled ethnic cleansing along the way**, all because a substantial portion of the immigrants that set sail lost their vision. Whether that was on the boats, or in the process of developing the societies that arose from the original settlements, somewhere along the way a group of **sociopathic opportunists** saw the "new" land as a chance to create a **great experiment.**

The **great experiment** was masked as an opportunity to create the perfect utopian democracy using all of the best elements of the world's culture at-large, but **it was really just a constructed effort to create a prison of vast quantities of contrasting peoples**, and **instead of honoring their differences** and **cultivating the developments that arose out of the cultural fusion**, they **forcefully subjugated select populations over different eras to instill generational trauma within the very foundation of American society**.

From the very beginnings of this experiment, there have been concerted efforts to divide and conquer the people. That's how a few small huts on a Chesapeake Bay coastline turned into an empire in a little over a century.

The American identity was an illusion from the very start, because America was always an empire that instilled ruthless opportunism into its people, and **consistently maintained a**

complex racial caste system based on **tall tales**, **hearsay**, and ***absolute lies*** being passed off as factual.

The American empire never saw its citizens as peoples with distinct cultures, they saw us as sub-Americans. The table folk **and those who maintained the power structure of the table folk** were the ***real* Americans**, and *everyone else* were the **others**.

This **ideological power scramble of the landmass they dubbed North America** was merely born as **an attempt for each European monarch to expand their empire**, first through direct hard power, and **then a softer power in the form of emigration**.

That's why residents of the empire are *so* obsessed with genealogies **if we're privileged enough to have available records of them**. We are systematically *not* defined as individuals or as cultures, but as what folks who look like us *once were*, **even if that image *isn't based in reality***.

It's why the table folk who came from Europe deemed themselves superior to Indigenous, Asian, and African peoples. They needed easy scapegoats and quick targets to point at when anything went wrong, and they refused to let the best aspects of each culture rise to the top in favor of *their* way of life.

Lost in this mix is the fact that **those European table folk deemed themselves superior to the Appalachian ground folk they created by throwing all of their favorite zoo animals together into chaos within a haunted and resource-plentiful mountain range**.

Over time, the desire to **win America for the motherland** became ingrained into the rest of the world. Many nations saw the opportunity, and sent who they could when they could, because they knew that **the empire was never founded on ideals that we know to be true**, but **was founded on a never-ending need to obtain power and wealth**.

As monarchs made known their territorial claims, news trickled to more **common people in the upper middle classes of society**, and **new waves** of immigrant colonists set sail hoping to build their *ideal* society.

The classic pilgrims that we all learned about in the empire's **education programming** were often regarded as pioneers and revolutionaries, but even that being *overwhelmingly* true within the bigger picture **wouldn't absolve them in their roles in contributing to the tyrannical** mindset that led to the empire's memoryholed **Indigenocide**, and it's also a **total fabrication that the pilgrims were the first Europeans to settle in the Americas**.

Those colonists were *not* the first European explorers in the Americas. **The first European explorers were the Norse people of northern Europe**, also commonly known in the empire's culture as **Vikings**, who **first landed in northern Canada and migrated throughout the continent a *whole few centuries* prior**. The Vikings were a ruthless and misunderstood people

too, but **their role in history often gets erased in favor of the *narrative*** that I'm sure you can decipher after processing this text.

The English colonies in the northeastern part of the present-day empire were highly religious, and that led to **many instances of mass hysteria** and **literal witch hunts as part of a systematic consolidation of power that mutated and seemingly gained sentience over many generations**.

As other immigrant-colonists from western Europe gradually learned of developments in the so-called New World, **many waves of emigration occurred** out of Europe and into the Americas.

By this point, **Spanish and French elites had long set up colonies in the Caribbean for illegal slave labor**, and **Portuguese elites had assisted them in tyranny by invading and *civilizing* the Indigenous nations of the continent they named South America**.

Using Indigenous civility as a talking point was highly effective as a fear tactic and was **instrumental** in justifying their **illegal actions** to the masses. **The reality of Indigenous societies at the time was a lot more nuanced than one can accurately use a sentence or a paragraph to conclude**.

The fact of the matter is that the European elites had no legal jurisdiction to infringe on the rights of a sovereign and independent nation based on psuedoscientific beliefs, *let alone* an *entire continent full of independent nations and stateless peoples* that persisted through millennia of cultural evolution and a wide spectrum of societal statuses ranging from peaceful civility to chaotic lawlessness.

I think **we can all agree on that**, but the **details *still* get scattered in conversations about it**.

Many **people use sweeping generalizations to characterize entire demographics of people that lived through eras of history**. This mindset goes back to the **very foundation of the empire**, where hearsay often served as acceptable evidence in public courts of law.

When the Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific Ocean, **they did so in the name of an abstraction, rather than the Indigenous people who taught them the lands**, or the will and determination that *they themselves* exerted on their trip to *manifest destiny*.

They did so in the name of a **murderous torture economy built on the backs of illegal coerced labor**, and they did so in the name of that same **economic Satan that forced theremoval of** a football stadium's worth of **Cherokee people** (and the **enslaved Black people they owned**) from central Appalachia to what was then the **Indian Territory**, where **many Cherokee folks still remain today.**

It wasn't insulting enough for Indigenous people in Appalachia to be forcibly removed from their lands and sent to an unfamiliar territory. As **the Indian Territory became the epicenter of**

hope for Indigenous representation in the empire that kicked them out, the empire extensively made and broke promises regarding the legal status of the territory. **The Cherokee people were promised statehood** so that they too could receive equal representation in the government that had repeatedly abducted and abused them and *their kin*, who are *our kin too*.

But it just wasn't insulting enough to steal their land and kick them out, so **the empire sent more European settlers out west in droves**, and as **more white folks got shipped into** what became **Oklahoma,** the **Cherokee people had been erased by the empire yet again**.

It wasn't insulting enough for Scots-Irish Appalachian people to get their Indigenous kinfolk shipped out either. I have no doubt in my mind that many of the white ground folk in the area showed no remorse over benefitting from this removal, but **I have even less doubt in my mind that there weren't a ton of pissed off white Appalachian ground folk who understood how heinous of an act this was** but were **too influenced by the empire's suppression of Appalachian solidarity to prevent it from happening**.

And it just wasn't insulting enough for the Scots-Irish Appalachian people to have their spiritual kin **brutally displaced**, so **the empire told the Cherokee ground folk that the white ground folk were the reason for the displacement** in an effort to eternally divide the three groups, the third of which being **the Black ground folk who had been woven into this disaster of a policy** and had rightfully realized by this point that **this family needs medication**.

Unfortunately, **the grand wizard at the head of the table wasn't done**.

It just wasn't insulting enough to have the mountain man image mocked in the empire and used to characterize a false ideal, because many of the mountain folks they based that caricature on were probably unaware of new explorations anyway, so **the empire amped it up quite a bit to drag them into the crossfire**.

A **Civil War was brewing** over a constitutional crisis regarding the legal status of enslaved humans in the southern states, and **Appalachia was right in the middle**. Many West Virginians know this, but it's an often-forgotten fact that the **state of West Virginia actually seceded from Virginia over this** humanitarian disaster. **The entire reason the State of West Virginia exists today was for pro-abolition live-and-let-live Appalachian ground folk to vote against secession from an empire** which had *reluctantly* taken an abolitionist stance, and **not out of a love for humanity**, but *out of a necessity to continue the empire in one piece* to **maintain their system of control**.

It was a decision motivated purely by the profit motives of the table, and **weaponized against ground folks who had to live with the fallout of the empire's illegal and dehumanizing labor theft**. The fallout, of course, **is still being felt to this day by *everyone* in different ways**, because the empire *knew* they had to uphold the **corporate mission**, and *they knew* that **ground folks with *some* means** in the northern states were coming to understand that **the free**

Black Americans moving there *weren't* set out to destroy society, so they **shifted the paradigm**.

The **Civil War** itself was fought in many places, and **sometimes in our range**. **The brutality of the battles** and the behaviors of both combatants, which **left much property destroyed and livestock murdered**, left many mountain folk with a bad taste in their mouths. A population of people that *already* wanted to live together in peace from government intervention *now had a reason* to hate their government, and **the conditions were ripening for a rebellion**.

The media though, that *bastard*.

See, **first the empire promised white Appalachians freedom in backcountry**, but **they didn't tell that it would spill so much blood**.

Then, **the empire promised the Cherokee Appalachians freedom in the midwest**, but **they didn't tell that it would spill so much blood**.

Do you see a pattern developing here?

With the rapid development of continent-crossing rail systems and the burgeoning industrial revolution, **the empire needed new energy sources**. The ease of transportation and shipping goods gave rise to **the most notable example of Appalachian exploitation** that still divides to this day: **coal mining**.

It's not uncommon for people in Appalachia to refer to coal mining as a way of life.

Indeed, coal and coal-related industries were among the most popular occupations for Appalachian people, who had traditionally been pretty non-participatory in the wider economic

system, and **it did provide economic booms in Appalachia** that brought many new workers into the region and provided families with enough to get by…

…**but the economic booms were smokescreens**, and **a way to get traditionally resilient peoples from multiple origins hooked on the prospects of fat stacks of American cash**, *if they were fortunate enough to get paid in legal tender*. It was widespread and normal for table folks from the coast to come in, **set up shop using Appalachian labor**, and **pay wages in a fake currency** known as **scrip**.**Scrip** was *not* legal tender in any way. It was **only usable inside the shops** and **services that the company set up**, and it **kept many Appalachian coal workers *chained* to their jobs**.

This was **literally** legal slavery, and it was never rectified, just like how the empire never rectified its brutal enslavement, systematic murder, and attempted ethnic cleansing of African folks on the east coast, or just like how the empire never rectified its early forms of psychological warfare using opioids to enslave Asian folks on the west coast, or just like how the empire never rectified

the forced extinction and later segregation of a plethora of shattered remnants of independent Indigenous cultures whose land they invaded.

Coal wasn't the only industry the table folk used to exploit Appalachia. **The vast forests throughout the range provided plentiful opportunity for the table folk at the logging companies**, who **exploited the Appalachian work ethic** in a similar way to the coal companies, and deforestation ran rampant as **elites from a far away place raped and pillaged the land for its natural resources**, refusing to give any of their earnings **back to the people whose land and lives they abused**.

It all culminated in the **Coal Wars**, a multi-decade long era in which **workers from West Virginia took up arms against their legal masters and fought for their rights to earn what their labor was worth**.

A series of armed uprisings brewed across the young state as **coal companies paid private investigators** and **public servant law enforcement officers to spy on workers and prevent them from organizing into unions**, which were born out of a **fundamental necessity for workers to act as one entity with the same bargaining power in the relationship as their collective employer**.

The most canonized of these was its crescendo, the **Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921**, which ended with the ballooning **empire's military defeating *our* freedom fighters** and **using lawfare to set back the labor movement so far back in Appalachia that *we still haven't recovered***.

Meanwhile, the rest of Appalachian mountain folk were **synthesizing their institutional trauma into musical bliss**.

Freed Black musicians, who themselves had remained **inhumanely caricatured and exploited by the empire's emerging mass media infrastructure**, and **whom some folks in Appalachia had been conditioned to believe the caricatures about to be true**, had **retained their love for a very special traditional instrument** that **their enslaved ancestors brought with them** to the continent.

The instrument, of course, is the **banjo**. Originally **made using materials common to the continent of Africa**, the **enslaved people brought the instrument with them and continued playing it through state-manufactured generations of institutional abuse**. They had different styles for playing it, and **over time the mountain folk of European descent learned these styles from the Black musicians they often interacted with in the exploitative labor environments of the mountains**.

The Appalachian ground folk combined their traditional African rhythmic fluidity and **their traditional Celtic instrumentation and folk ballads** and created **bluegrass music**, or as

some folks these days have come to interpret it, **Appalachian jazz**.

Bluegrass music itself **was born out of a creolization of people in Appalachia**, but as recording equipment was becoming widely available to the table folk for the first time, **the Black musicians that played such a crucial role in the creation of the genre got snuffed out of it.**

As with much of the southeastern part of the empire at the time, Appalachia's core area was mostly legally segregated, but as we know, some hill folk don't tend to abide by irrational government overreach. On the same hand, **many Appalachian people of European descent benefitted from this erasure**, and they should be criticized for their role in that **while still being respected for what they also did to push Appalachian music forward**.

Record companies followed the empire's artificial Overton window of the time.

The empire segregated *art*.

Around this time, **segregated Black artists in the deep south were studying classical European music theory and re-adapting their own blues traditions into complex jazz compositions**, and **proto-bluegrass was developing in the mountains**. For anyone who is familiar with basic music theory, you can see where this is going.

The **white artists who made proto-bluegrass and folk music** were dubbed **country music**, and **pieces from the Black artists who made similar styles, as well as blues, jazz, and early rock 'n' roll** were dubbed **race records**.

This **artificial segregation by the empire led to the disenfranchisement of Black southerners *and* Appalachians of *all origin*** from **their own styles of music**, which were **all playing off of each other** and **healing artificial differences between ground folk**.

The **record companies**, who were **owned by the elites**, who were the **folks at the table**, ***laughing* at us starving on the ground**, ***stole* bluegrass and developed it into country music in a city *just* close enough to Appalachia to recruit and exploit mountain talents**, and ***just* close enough to keep an eye on the emerging musical evolution of the deep south, which was primarily fueled by young Black people hardly removed from emancipation**, while the **table folk in Nashville incorporated blues into country music to bastardize it for everybody** and **their cousin companies on the coasts whitewashed jazz and rock**.

The empire's obsession with the role of Black people in its culture's musical evolution is interesting too, because **it plays directly into the trauma and abuse cycle that they use to keep the culture war going**. If you see a conversation about it online, you're sure to see a wide range of strong takes. **The empire has consistently erased the contributions of Black people to its empire's culture**, and as a result some folks overstate contributions, which only creates

more chaos between regular ground folks, because **the empire has convinced us that individual liberty is a zero-sum game divided among superficial boundaries**.

The role that Black people played in developing Appalachian music, and American music at-large, should absolutely be celebrated. We should celebrate the role that **all the ground folk played,** because these genres of music didn't develop in a vacuum, and people of all kinds of different cultures and ethnic origins were bouncing musical ideas off of each other and learning new things. **Giving credit where credit is due doesn't mean sacrificing the artificial identity the empire has conditioned you to defend with your life**.

If anything, **music is one of the only things bringing together the ground folk of a segregated empire**, **so it's no wonder they divided *it* across artificial lines too**.

Regarding a point from earlier about the white artists that benefitted from Black erasure: it's not that we should erase the good people throughout our history who erased others. We should criticize them, and we *should* mention it when discussing them sometimes, but the real truth is that **they too were victims of the empire's programming in a time where information was a lot more gatekept and awareness of humanity itself as a global and interconnected entity was incredibly low compared to now**. They were **operating within the paradigm of the time**, much in the way that **we're operating within the paradigm of now**.

I can't verify this, but I'd be more than willing to bet that **the average Appalachian in the 20th century was as rational and empathetic as they were aware enough to be**, and I think we should commend them for that rather than erasing them too for unjustly hurting people as a byproduct of the imperial abuse cycle that they, too, were born into.

Playing into this is **a commonly overlooked element of the empire's systematic suppression of Appalachian culture**: the **media propaganda they use to suppress it**.

Look at the classic hillbilly caricature depicted in media and tell me that the **cartoonish**, **exaggerated**, ***universally-recognized depiction*** isn't **based in another evil caricature** that you've seen depicted so often that it's almost ubiquitous with the empire's culture. Tell me it isn't **based directly on a caricature that was made for the sole purpose of keeping our Black kin emotionally subservient to their masters**, and **tell me that the Irish version of that caricature wasn't created to play a sick role in the empire's evil chess match**.

Don't forget that **Irish Americans were discriminated against by the table folk at one point too.**

Rising in the deep south was **a vast network of Black leaders *still* fighting for their rights to exist as people in the eyes of the empire**, and as the **Civil Rights movement of the 1960s** came and transformed society, it showed us that **solidarity among artificial lines can and does improve the living conditions for many.**

Coinciding with this movement were **efforts by a certain potential table head** to improve the economic conditions of Appalachia, and **when he was appointed to the seat**, he **spearheaded the development** for the **Appalachian Regional Commission** and earned trust among many Appalachian folks who had rightly felt that the federal government had abandoned them long ago.

Lo and behold, a **good ole Irish boy**, *one of us* they probably said, **finally showing us that the government can help *us too***… and **before he could systemize positive change in Appalachia,** the empire **spearheaded *him*** too, the **perfectly-timed footage** of which **lives on in our collective imperial memory as a foundational piece of cultural trauma**, **on purpose**.

See, the particular table head of which I'm referring to is **a critical part of the entire equation**.

I mentioned earlier that **there are table folk**, and **then there are those who maintain the power of the table folk**. Those are **usually individual ground folks that the table folk have obtained some sort of leverage over**, whether that's through financial promises or *kompromat*, or just classic American brainwashing techniques **developed by the scientists they recruited *directly* from Adolf Hitler**.

The **table folk use a variety of methods to gain enough power over the ground folk to coerce those ground folk into upholding the table** and becoming their **table stepfolk**.

Here's the rub: **the red-headed stepchild can swear up and down that the dark-haired man is its father**, and **the red-headed stepchild can fundamentally believe that the dark-haired man is its father until it becomes true *to* the red-headed stepchild**, but **the dark-haired man will never be the red-headed stepchild's father in a biological sense,** and therefore **the genetics that the red-headed stepchild passes on are not derived from its father**, though its behaviors might be. Much in the same way, **the empire has convinced the white population of Appalachia** that we are at the table, and *we may be to an extent*, because **the empire knows that we are foundational in maintaining its artificial power structure**.

The imagery of the hillbilly stereotype directly builds upon the dehumanizing stereotypes of Black Americans, and the **double sidedness of the caricature allows the empire to manipulate white Appalachian people** more than we have collectively yet to realize.

The **Black caricatures are rooted in pure destruction**. **Destruction of identity and character based on a false perception of the destruction of society**, which **allows the table folk to separate themselves from the immorality** of their actions.

Meanwhile, **the hillbilly caricatures take all of those same elements and intentionally make them endearing**. The resiliency of the violently uneducated and backwards mountain man, **the same image the empire stole and bastardized to push their manifest destiny hoax**, is seen as wholesome and respectable, because **the hillbilly is subhuman just like *those*** people, but at

least **he's a subhuman who *trusts* us** now that we've pinned the blame on him and **isolated him in shame**.

> *"If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you." - **Lyndon B. Johnson***

Stagnant economic growth in the 1970s led to **a Hollywood actor and crisis stuntman being installed as the table head in the 1980s**, and **at the commands of invisible hand of the free market, he gutted the federal government** that had *finally* started officially *acting* like they were helping Appalachian folks.

They formed a commission for regional economic development, and then they gutted the federal government before any of that economic development really got to see the fruits of its labor.

Oh, **and then they decided that the energy they made us depend on actually wasn't very good for the planet**. It *isn't*, **but that's not the point**. The point is that **Appalachian people and our parent peoples were exploited for the resources that were in the region**, **never received the riches that the elites earned from extracting those resources**, and **were told that our goldmine isn't useful to the empire anymore and to kick rocks and learn to code**, maybe.

They didn't consider the effects that working in the coal industry has on the body.**They didn't consider the effects that blue collar work in Appalachia has on the body in general**.

They didn't consider what would happen when they shut down the factories in the northern parts of Appalachia either.

Wait, **they did**, because **it's all an illusional power structure built on layered and complex hierarchies** and **has been part of a sustained plan** since the beginning.

They *knew* that kind of labor wore down our bodies, and **they *knew* that sitting around and starving from unemployment** was a **recipe for addictive behavior**, because ***they* instructed the doctors to pump us full of the same painkillers *they* used to subjugate the Asian workers who built the trans-continental railroad**!

Doctors wrote scripts like they were *handing out candy*, and the sources became shadier and shadier, until **the scripts got cut off**.

The thing is, **when they pump you full of opiates because you're in pain**, and then **they take the opiates away from you**, you are still going to want and *need* those opiates.

They made Appalachian people chemically addicted to destructive substances, **took the substances away from us**, **made us turn to illegal**, **unsafe**, and **unregulated versions of those substances**, **locked up the ones of us who got caught with them**, **buried the ones of us who used too much of them**, and **bought up massive amounts of the cheap property our dead kinfolk left behind**, **pricing you out of your hometown forever so they can have a 4th vacation house**.

They told you're lesser than them because your people are a bunch of lazy inbred uneducated pillhead freeloader hillbilly redneck red-headed step-children and **your music sucks too**.

Oh, *and* **they pumped Black communities across the entire empire** (even within Appalachia) **full of crack cocaine for the same reasons**, but we won't talk about how **the *biggest lie of our lives* was that there is organic racial tension in America**. It's **true *now***, but only **because it was an artificially-propped up divide for so long that it became a self-fulfilling prophecy**.

Human beings didn't develop empathy within the past few hundred years. People in the past often get mischaracterized to an insane degree based on the standards of now, and it's not uncommon for people to automatically project criticism onto *any* person who was in a socially-approved caste, as if they were solely responsible for upholding that system, or **as if they were even aware at the trickery that the empire was pulling on them**.

They took an Appalachian people with a comparable population to California and split us up over 12 different different states to neuter our voting power and dehumanize us *too* in the grand and interconnected web of the empire's abuse on its own citizens, in such a way that so many of us never even came close to cracking **the code they used to *artificially* divide and conquer the Appalachian ground folk who who had begun to unify with different interests in mind than those of the empire's profit motives**.

They **scattered a population of already-displaced peoples** and **systematically manipulated the largest demographic of folks within that population** with the sole purpose of **establishing whiteness as a** *value* **fundamental to the maintenance and upholding of the table's power structure over its stepfolk's *real* kin**.

Marginalized communities inside of Appalachia have expanded on these themes before from their unique perspectives, and it's important to say that even in all of this, **the personal experience of the *author* of this text is *still* rooted in a Eurocentric viewpoint** that we *should* validate **alongside the voices we've traditionally contributing to snuffing out.**

This is not a demonization of **anybody** on the basis of familial origin. As someone of primary European descent with other bits *possibly* thrown in, I understand that I was born into an **artificial class of table stepfolk** who either intentionally *or* **unintentionally maintain that**

power structure through inaction, which is **quite literally** a **blessing that many of us have taken for granted**.

The nuance is more complex though.

Much like many subcommunities across the empire, **many Appalachian ground folk have internalized the shame from the traumatic dehumanizing stereotypes based on the things we once loved about ourselves but were taught to hate**.

Much like many subcommunities across the empire, **many Appalachian ground folk have been artificially separated across imaginary borders**, whether those were **rivers that separate the empire's categorization of us** or **ideas that were planted to control the narrative on the ground**.

Many marginalized communities these days are **built around solidarity**, because **as humans we have come to understand the power we have when we act together to defend the rights of one another against an oppressive regime**.

The table folk scattered a population of peoples who *were always ready* to move past the differences the empire forced them to hyper-focus on out of a weaponized mutation of the universal emotion of hatred. They scattered a population of peoples and then **told some vulnerable folks that now dominated the culture that *we* were special**, and ***we* deserved the riches from our gold mines that *they* stole from us**, which ***they* actually forced *us* to steal from the native folks**.

They scattered a broken population who now had the strength to stand up to their empire's table and tell it to ***eat shit and crumble***.

The racist culture the empire was fundamentally constructed around **was top-down**. The folks at the table, **who controlled the spread of information**, **designed it this way** for sick reasons, and **they designed it so that it was almost impossible to fail**. It's amazing that they had the foresight to institutionalize trauma as effectively as they did, considering the system of government they designed has been broken longer than I've been alive.

The **core concept** behind all of this is that **it's all a vast web of traumatic dominance in which we are all victims**, and unfortunately for Appalachian people, many of us look like the usual **table folk** and that in and of itself becomes a marginalization.

It *is* fundamentally true that many white Appalachian folks have been treated substantially better than many minority Appalachians.

But... it doesn't change the fact that the federal government of the empire has been committing acts of terror on the American peoples for centuries, and even though many Appalachian folks are lower on the list than most_,_ we're still on that list, and nobody talks about that.

We're not being hunted and deported by ICE *yet*, but sometimes genocide doesn't involve firearms.

Sometimes genocide happens in the form of **systematic murder**. Sometimes it's **cultural erasure.**

If **segregating the ground folk who were innovating popular music together and increasing their collective awareness**, and **then separately sending them en masse across oceans to die in trenches for false ideals**, and **then shutting down all the factories and mines they worked in**, and **then cartoonishly dehumanizing them for media ratings**, and **then pumping their segregated communities full of destructive and addictive drugs**, and **systematically weaponizing rage bait talking points to force division between them**, and **then sending in the federal government to squash their rebellions** isn't genocide then I don't know what is, but then again, **when an empire's foundational structure is written in the language of murder**, it becomes difficult to understand what's truly normal when you **see the lie for what it is**.

Despite the foundational destruction of its peoples, many folks still hold the empire in such a high regard. It's a touchy subject, because **so many beautiful folks have fought and died to defend it and the ideals that they were told it stood for**. I never served, but **I support veterans and veterans rights**, and I make sure to truly appreciate every veteran I speak to. I believe that **a government should absolutely do everything it can to give back to its veterans and help them reintegrate to civilian life and succeed when they do it**. I have a world of respect knowing that **some gave all to defend the *ideal* of freedom**.

But **the freedom was never actually real, it was an illusion forced upon people, and wholly interpreted in a variety of ways by people depending on how it treated them**.

Never forget that the empire rounded up American citizens and **shoved them into concentration camps with no legal basis**. I bet they never taught you about **the completely legal American folks with Japanese heritage that they tortured and left to die**, so recently that some of whom *are still alive*, and **then threw a metaphorical penny at to get them to shut up**.

If **the wealthiest empire on a planet is rounding up its *others* into camps and leaving them to die**, while simultaneously **overcompensating on imperial defense by using civilization-ending weapons that shatter the very concept of ethic itself**, all while **propagandizing its *real American men* or 14-year-olds whose ages couldn't be verified by the most technologically-advanced country *in that world* for some reason**, to **kill fascists**, *all while they're preparing to transform their society into a surveillance police state…*

Who were the real fascists? The answer, of course, is **all of them**!

To call Adolf Hitler a piece of garbage would be an insult to the landfill that they call his grave, and he will forever be remembered as a stain on humanity, but all while the empire was mythologizing Hitler into the most evil boogeyman of all time, its people forgot that **for centuries the empire had been building Hitler's foundation** with its treatment of ***anyone*** **who didn't fit in at the table**.

Never forget that the empire also got rich by propagandizing your dads and **your pappaws** and **your cousins** and **your uncles** and **your sons** and **your nephews** and **your kinfolk into *volunteering to die***, and **just know that it eats the empire alive knowing it could've sent more of your kinswomen to die too**.

Never forget what the empire does to the people you love, because eventually the first line on their list will contain your name, and you'll have no one left to stand in solidarity with as they aim to destroy you.

After digging into what it really means to *be* Appalachian, **I can't personally identify as American anymore**. **I am still a citizen of the United States** of America, of course, and **I hope to remain a citizen for as long as the empire exists**. I pray that the empire doesn't rain down on me in the dead of night while I dream about disaster, but knowing the state of things right now, **it wouldn't shock me**.

As a citizen of the United States of America in the year 2025, **all I want is peace**. All I strive to do is **speak peace to power**, and as a victim of various levels of abuse, and someone who has abused others to try (and fail) to transfer my own pain, **I do not condone or support violence in any way**. I learned the hard way the lesson that **we should never hurt others**, *no matter what*. I try my best to abide by that, but if I fail just know that the principle is there, and that shouldn't detract from the message laid out in this paper.

I should also add that I am **not** suicidal and **I have my mental health under control**.

Appalachians strongly believe in peaceful revolution, and **many of my Appalachian kinfolk see revolution as an inevitability**, but **I *know* that the empire disagrees with our view**...

> *"Thirty-ought sixes, Pappaw's old pistol, how many do ya reckon? Would it be four or five? Or would that be the start of a long violent history of tucking our tails as we tried to abide?" -* ***Tyler Childers***

Appalachian Zoo

> *"What's a chummer to do in the Appalachian zoo? I'm Harambe and the bullets they're usin' are riotproof, no call for a truce… this is dead red aggression, rigged in elections, bred with cynicism and depression…" -* ***Tantra Sweet***

Many Appalachians are blessed enough *right now* to **have never given any serious thought to how a situation might arise in which *you* become targeted by your government**, but **this moment is going to be the best chance you have for a while**, because at the time of writing this, **the empire's mask is dropping on us like an accelerating atom bomb**.

The racial makeup of Appalachia and the current administration's manipulation tactics have given many of our people an *incredibly* false sense of security. Nobody understands how dire of a situation we are really in because they are **tuning out** in exhaustion.

The huge elephant in the room that everyone wants to avoid talking about, but **for some it's impossible to do**, is the **status of the United States as an entity**.

We are **an artificially divided people** who **share a lot of common ground that**, **in a vacuum**, offsets and builds upon the cultural differences between us all, **but in the American empire, those differences are systematically weaponized against us to keep us complacent and cogging away in a trauma-filled money-minting machine**.

In a way, **Appalachian Spring is an open call for a psychological combat ceasefire and peace treaty in this War on Personal Independence that has been waged by the United States government and other multinational forces since the inception of this empire**.

For decades, critics of the empire have noted the existence of a **military-industrial complex which is eternally hungry for economic growth fueled by the manufacturing of military combat**.

The government's coining of this term and societal institutionalization of this public revelation **contributed to the growing mistrust of the empire itself**, but the American identity remained strong. The United States became **a loose nation of *relatively* common people who were *relatively* united in their *mildly* anti-elite, *mildly* anti-government sentiments**.

The revelation of the military-industrial complex was nothing more than a smokescreen. It was a distraction from the future of warfare, which we traditionally knew to be fought on fields with armies of men and weaponry. The modern critique of the military-industrial complex is **insanely relevant** and even more **accurate in its scope**, but **it's misguided**, and **that's by design**.

As technology evolved in the decades that followed the end of World War II, **war itself was unofficially redefined** as being fought through **psychological combat** instead of physical combat, **echoing and developing tactics that the empire suspected their ideological opponents were using**.

I'm a victim of a painful and misunderstood mental health disorder, and I have struggled with consistent medication management over the course of my time in therapy. What typically happens is that I take my meds for a while, then I get to a place where I feel really good and can

function normally, then decide that I'm healed and therefore I don't need the medication anymore, and then a few days or weeks later I crash and burn into a manic state of paranoid delusions.

That's information that you didn't need to know, but it's a solid analogy when looking at the empire we're stuck inside.

When a society gets sick, in order to heal **it must take medication** in the form of **economic policy that creates better situations for workers,** and **social policy that creates better situations for those individuals** and **communities for which the system isn't working**.

When the American and global economies crashed in the 1920s and remained harsh and unforgiving to average people for well over a decade, the federal government took **drastic action to expand government spending programs** to **stimulate economic development** and recovery, and it worked really well in tandem with the post-war baby boom. **Federal spending, propagated by a substantial increase in corporate tax rates, greatly improved conditions for millions of Americans across the empire**.

Many people from all walks of life benefitted from this, although the states in the south were still **barely removed from the conclusion of the Civil War**, which left many southerners bitter and resentful.

Of course, **the abolition movement and the Civil War were necessary and justified for the betterment of all of God's children**, but in many southerners that bitterness remained and **was artificially weaponized and instilled throughout the generations that followed**.

The economic boom in the 1940s and 1950s was spurred by a lot of different things, but alongside the federal projects was the **rise of the automobile in American culture**. Many folks today can't imagine life without their car, but it wasn't always like this. In fact, **before the middle of that century, most Americans didn't own cars and instead relied on growing systems of public transportation like streetcars for local travel and extended rail networks for long-distance travel**.

Public transit and **other more primitive**, **sustainable forms of transportation were widespread and common until the automobile industry systematically purchased entire systems of public transport with the sole purpose of dismantling them**, making owning an automobile *necessary* for *anything* and **lining their pockets even further** while **regular Americans in cities were driven further into isolated suburbs away from people their society told them were *others***.

In fact, **when you look at aerial shots** of many major cities across the empire's history compared to now, **you can see just how many (often integrated Black or immigrant) neighborhoods they tore down to build interstate highways that did nothing but gut the**

cultural epicenters of human solidarity and make those cities incredibly stale and boring in the process, just like they did when **they weaponized racist fear tactics to split up the Appalachian ground folk.**

The American people got sick again as the 1960s raged on, and you can point to a lot of different reasons, but **the 1960s were when the persisting rot in American society really started to come alive**.

It sounds like a conspiracy theory, and much of it after the program *officially* ended 1973 is speculative, but **verified, official, *federal* documents, proved the existence a federal project started in 1953 to control human minds using a combination of drugs such as LSD and psychological torture tactics, and they paint the entire picture very clearly**.

Actually, that's misleading.

They didn't start trying to control minds in 1953, **they started doing it earlier when they recruited thousands of disgraced nazi scientists from Germany after the fallout of the war**!

Indeed, **Operation Paperclip is often swept under the rug of Amerimperial shame**, because what would ever happen if **the empire** admitted to you that **they were *always* fascists convincing you that *someone else* was the reason you're psychologically broken and financially broker**?

Do you really believe that the American empire, the wealthiest empire in the history of the world, the empire that was **scared shitless** and **scrambling** to put a man on the moon before the Soviets, **wouldn't have stooped so low as to deceive the world on such a grand scale**?

Surely they had a moral standard higher than that of **projecting national unity and strength through a Stanley Kubrick production**!

They didn't have the blood of millions on their hands.

But if it did it wasn't that bad, they all **got a place to live**!

And if it was then **it wasn't a big deal because they're *savages***.

And if it was then **it wasn't my fault because that was another administration**.

And if it was my fault then I was just trolling, bro!

But I'm actually not, and **they deserved it.** Oh, don't forget to **celebrate Thanksgiving**, that day where **we all sat around in harmony and sang kumbaya and nothing bad after that ever, ever happened**!

The mind control project backfired, and **the resulting lab leak created an explosion of awareness for many regular ground folk throughout the empire who were able to**

transcend the mindset that they had been instilled with since birth. **As a result of the acid bomb they dropped on the empire's youth**, cultural mushroom clouds were popping up left any right, and at a faster pace, before the youth movement's conviction was quickly **co-opted by the empire as a means to produce profits**.

That war rages on today through a thing we sure do call the Internet.

The empire became *the* very thing it *said* it set out to dismantle: a **hardly-functioning**, **restrictive,** and **oppressive society unethically** and **illegally built on the backs of broken idealists** and the **institutionalization of learned helplessness**. **The empire turned on its own citizens to squash an increasingly-relevant ideology** and **masked it as national security**.

Through a **rotating door of different figureheads** that we call the **President**, each administration takes authority with the **same corporate mission**, though they may utilize the empire's military infrastructure to execute **different strategies in their protection of business interests**. This gives Americans the **illusion** that we live in a system with competing ideologies, but in reality **many of those ideologies are simply ammunition in the age of information warfare**.

In 2025, **the vast majority of American citizens are being systematically farmed for ammunition using a massive data surveillance infrastructure**, and **a smaller population of American citizens is being hyper-pressured, if not outright coerced, into participating in the war**.

The average American is broke, stressed out, worried, scared, and **increasingly turning to digital isolation as a coping mechanism**, which continues feeding the beast that I have termed the **technomilitary-industrial complex**, a redefinition which reframes the original meaning in a way that makes more sense to modern folks who are more familiar with this hybridized version of warfare that we see today.

Since these tactics utilize **trauma** for effectiveness, the culture war burns on as a way to **inflict perpetual trauma (especially to the marginalized) to keep the people in a mindset so shattered that many don't even recognize the damage within themselves**, and **that's why every four to eight years there is a so-called changing of the guard and a shift in cultural attitudes**.

If you've noticed, the **business interests *always* remain protected**. **Corporate power is *always* protected**.

Gay people, Black people, trans people, women, Latino people, Indigenous people, disabled people, and **any other marginalized group of people you can think of**… **we always get a moment in the spotlight**, because **the empire needs to give us the illusion that we're**

continually making progress, just *slowly*, which is *the way things are supposed to be* in a nation with so many different cultures and identities.

I fundamentally reject that idea.

***We* fundamentally reject that idea.**

When it comes to basic human rights and decency, Americans **should not** be forced to sit around and wait for progress like many people have been for so long, because **eventually you find that your country has actually *regressed* while you waited**, but you didn't realize it because **they told you they gave you rights**, so therefore they must be *unalienable*, *right*?

When you rightfully question your diminishing legal status as a human being, they tell you that you're acting too radical and imagining scenarios that don't exist, which is the textbook definition of gaslighting.

The empire is **mass gaslighting**, or **masslighting** us, if you will.

Masslighting is the **government institutionalization of domestic psychological warfare with the purpose of keeping its citizens subservient to the empire's profit motives and prevent them from emotionallyseizing their independence**.

The masslighting isn't inherently partisan in the context of our **two-party system illusion**, but it is partisan when you consider the undeniable hypothesis that **the empire is truly a one-party system**, and **that party's singular overarching goal is the expansion of corporate profits** and the **concentration of wealth and resources to the very elite members of the ruling class**.

As the great comic and social critic George Carlin once said: **It's a big club… and you ain't in it. You and I are *not* in the big club**.

The day that the American peoples *truly* accept what we know to be true regarding the nature of our political arena is the day they fear more than anything.

For **many**, the empire isn't something they actively think about on a regular basis, but there are also ***many*** of us **who worry about the absolute power being concentrated at the top of the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, through the most technologically-transformative era in the history of humanity, in a time when people are so easily propagandized and misinformed by malicious forces from a wide spectrum of ideological beliefs, and nobody knows what to actually trust anymore**.

I truly believe in the power of words and the power of ideas, and **I believe in the power of large groups of people to enact massive change** *as long as they **break through their imperial programming.**

People in the empire have been **systematically programmed** to do a lot of different things, but first and foremost the ground folk of the empire have been programmed to put **the existence and legitimacy of the empire and its wealth** at the very top of their priority list, even if it's written in invisible ink.

The **Ameridigm** is built on **power structures**, and **no matter where you are within that power structure**, **no matter what individual nation you belong to within the empire of nations that is the United States of America**, **no matter what you believe in the very depths of your soul, you are driven by an inherent urge to feed the beast *no matter what***.

You are driven to make more money. **You are driven** to get that promotion. **You are driven** to lease that new car every 2 years. **You are driven** to go on vacation to a new destination every year even though you can't afford it. **You are driven** to buy the newest technology, because you don't want your competition to get a leg up on you. **You are driven** to stomp out your competition, because a common pattern that exists among survivors of abuse is that **they later go on to inflict abuse on others.**

In **abusive relationships**, whether those are romantic, platonic, or economic relationships, there is **a trauma bond** that **emotionally latches the victim onto the abuser** and **convinces them that they cannot leave the situation.** The abuser abuses, the victim feels and then shuts out the pain, the abuser calms down and apologizes, promises better behavior, behaves a little bit better for an indefinite period of time, and then abuses again.

It's a vicious cycle, and it's one **that around 14 nations of different post-American identities find themselves in in the 2020s**.

We are being driven towards the cliff of a vast canyon, and **we are trying to pump the brakes,** but **unfortunately the vehicle we're in is a tacky polything pulled out of a PlayStation 2 game and the brakes locked up the moment the psychopath at the head of the table dropkicked the gas pedal**.

Many people, and I reckon even **someone that you love with all your heart**, is **scared to death** because **they fear that the federal government is going to infringe upon their rights as a human being**, or as the wonderful governor of what I hope is someday my beautiful former state says, a ***child of God***.

In many cases **they already are**.

These are not caricatures that you see in an artificial reality on a phone screen. **These are not the butt of a joke you see in memes** that target their identity and the problems that their communities face. **These are human beings with families**. **These are girls and boys full of imagination and hope for the future**. These are **creative kids and teenagers who want to be able to freely explore who they are, without a lifetime of societally-inflicted trauma, so**

that they know they've ended up in the right place someday. These are **adults with their own children and families who lived and still live in secret, or who never found their way because the eras and societies they live through either wouldn't have accepted them at the time or can't accept them now**.

These are **our fellow individual liberty freedom fighters that the empire has programmed so many people to hate**, because you may have a very specific image in mind, but **you never considered that those creative free-thinking folks I'm talking about would rather be doing cool hillbilly stuff like huntin and fishin and flatpickin and shinin and sewin their own quilts and dresses in a traditional style *while also sometimes participating in lifestyles and ideologies that you disagree with***.

The empire is **systematically turning you against people *that you love*** as a way to **maintain control over you**.

In a free and just American society, **a government would never target an individual based on any sort of identity they hold**, because **that is a direct violation of the very First Amendment right** that we claim to hold in such a high regard. Gender expression, or cultural expression, or racial identity, or sexual identity, or whatever it is… that's all they are, **are forms of expression**, whether that's a choice **or not**.

A human **cannot choose** what their genetic code says, but **the identity that forms out of their valid human experience *is* the catalyst behind the beliefs that shape their personality**, which **makes their identity** itself **a valid form of expression**, **no matter what** way you look at it, and **their right to express it freely without hate should be paramount to the American ethos**.

Yet many people find themselves **caught up in a loop** of **blaming those people for problems that may not even exist**. In many cases, **numbers get distorted** to epic proportions, **misrepresenting the actual scenario that's going on**.

***Propagandists* paint a trans teenager in sports as a war on women**, without looking at the data that says that **despite what the media would have you believe**, **trans teenagers make up a small percentage of the American population** and an even smaller percentage of athletes, and that even then, **transgender teenagers often have similar physiological structures to cisgender teenagers their same age**, because as it turns out, **gender studies cannot be boiled down to a single talking point**.

***Propagandists* paint a rural man showcasing his hobby on his personal range as a radical right-wing terrorist, even though he has no desire to harm anyone**, and is more than happy to explain how he feels that **ethical, responsible, and structurally institutionalized firearm knowledge is paramount to maintaining an ethical moral code in a free society,** because as it turns out, **gun safety statistics cannot be boiled down to a single talking point**.

The two are not mutually exclusive. ***None*** of the culture war wedge points are, and there exist a **wide spectrum of interconnected folks *on the ground*** who fit into various spaces **in between *and* outside of these two examples**, and ***every one of their individual experiences is valid***.

As a very dear hillrade of mine often says, "***All I want is for my gay cousin to marry who she wants and defend her kids and her marijuana plants with guns**." As shocking as it sounds, that mindset is *widespread* around here.

The talking heads appeal to your emotions though, because **they know those scapegoat populations are small enough and often assimilate well enough that many folks *may* not be aware that they're pleasantly interacting with each other on a regular basis**. Facts get distorted and twisted to fuel the **narrative** that is **designed to make you angry** and **isolate you from your Appalachian kinfolk**, because they know **a divided population is far easier to control**.

The **hybrid lifestyle of Appalachia highlights one of the core problems that the American public thinks they are facing right now**. The **rural-urban divide** is one of the many aspects of the culture war that is **splitting the empire apart**, and for many it seems that **the *other* side is living in a totally different reality.**

The problem here can't be boiled down to one single problem, but **backgrounds have a lot to do with it.** For many rural folk, their family has been backcountry since they arrived on the continent. For many city folk, their families arrived in the city and that's where they've been for generations.

There's nothing wrong with differences between the backgrounds of individuals and the cultures they develop, and I don't think it would be inaccurate to say that a New Jersey resident whose family arrived in Manhattan from Italy in the 19th century and has remained in that metropolitan area might have a fundamentally different outlook on how a society can operate, compared to say, a **young woman from Charleston, Appalachia whose mother is from rural India and whose father is from Mingo County**.

When I was younger I spent a fair amount of time at my grandparents' house in the sticks in Kentucky, which was only about a 15 minute drive from my family's house in the suburbs of my small Appalachian home city, and at the time I *hated* it because I was so involved with electronics. **I wanted to play on my Gameboy inside on the couch rather than run out in the holler and learn the ways of a lifestyle that I was programmed to look down upon** only 15 minutes away.

While many Appalachians have remained embedded in rural life, and **the overlap between rural folks and city folks in Appalachia is almost universal**, it wasn't totally uncommon while

I was growing up in the 2000s and early 2010s for people to feel a sense of shame and insecurity regarding our cultural heritage. For me, I can verifiably say that **I suppressed my accent as much as possible as a teenager**, because **I associated the culture and thepeople of Appalachia with religious bigotry and the growing influence of harmful ideology on the American right.**

I didn't want to sound like a *hillbilly*, **until I decided to just let my inner hillbilly be free**. My employment at a gas station on the outskirts of my city, where the suburbs gradually become rural territory full of country and city folks alike, brought out that twang that was **written into my very soul**.

My boss was an openly gay woman near retirement age, born around the tail end of the Baby Boomer generation. She grew up in the 1960s and 1970s during a cultural revolution among the American youth, and **she fought like hell alongside her community for the rights they should have had and retained starting on day one**, as well as the respect of the American public.

One of the most interesting things that I noticed in my long period of employment at this store was the fact that **so many customers had a deep respect for her as a human being**. They would come in and have real conversations with her, **even the most rural of Trump-supporting white men,** and they would have mutual understandings regarding a wide variety of topics. **I can't speak for what they said when they weren't around, but in the store *they were kin***.

When you think of Appalachia, you probably picture elderly conservative Baptists who are racist and hate anyone who doesn't fit inside the mold they've defined. I won't deny that **there *are* a substantial and vocal population of Appalachian people who hold negative and harmful beliefs** resembling the caricatures, and those people *should* have their arguments **peacefully** and **systematically dismantled** by the larger demographic of people who want **more love and less hate**.

At the end of the day, though, **it's incredibly important to recognize these caricatures** as what they are: **caricatures**. They are **extrapolations based on small pieces of evidence, used to mischaracterize large demographics of people that the empire deem as *lesser* with the sole purpose of fueling controlled internal division to fund their private space trips**.

The empire does it with almost any categorizable group of people, to varying extents and methods. Some communities *certainly* have it worse than others, but **the whole myth perpetuated by the empire is that another person's plight somehow diminishes *your own* plight**.

We live in an age of rage, because **the empire has also systematically programmed us to participate in a competition of oppression**, **where progress is a zero sum game and equity**

among all people means loss for the *ruling class of which they have convinced you that you are a member.* If you are an average white blue collar reader, I must reiteratethat **you are not and you never were a part of the ruling class**. **You are part of the class that the empire has convinced are the *real Americans* whose taxes pay for the lavish lifestyles of the marginalized scapegoat communities**.

This is a fundamental lie on a myriad of different levels, but mathematically speaking and at a generous estimate of the area's common blue collar wages, **the small amount of tax revenue collected from your earnings are a *drop in the bucket* compared to the vast wealth of the richest table folk**.

Here is a fundamental truth on a myriad of different levels: **you deserve to earn more from your employer than you currently do**.

The truth nuke is that under a certain threshold, *your* taxes *shouldn't* be used to pay for anybody's lifestyles if you opt out of it, but ***they're not*****,** and ***they don't have to be because the empire has enough wealth to completely end world hunger many times over***.

The empire's statistical wealth is misleading though, because it signals that all ground folk are living wealthy and lavish lifestyles, and we all know that while Americans generally have it better than many in the world, we are as a whole having a pretty rough time right now.

That's by design.

The empire's wealth, and therefore **power**, is **concentrated into a *microscopic* number of hands**, and **those hands sit at the table and systematically pull your strings constantly**.

They're inside your workplace.

They're inside your car.

They're inside your house.

They're inside your pocket everywhere you go, and their surveillance state runs *deep*.

You're never the wiser. You may feel a strange emotion that tells you something is wrong here, but you can't articulate it in a safe way, and **the belief that you can't do anything about it has *become a self-fulfilling prophecy***.

The empire was said to be founded on democratic ideals, but it **lost its way** when **it collectively decided to put *profit* and *power* over *peace* and *prosperity for all people***, which ironically was **the day that Christopher Columbus first stepped off the boat onto North American lands**.

This is not a piece intended to demonize individuals that are caught up within the Ameridigm. **No matter who you voted for in any election, I want you to know that I don't hate you and I am on your side**.

I am trying to convince you that **the table folk are copperheads**.

Donald Trump is often **declared by the masses to be *the problem***, but in that same breath, **any random Democrat out of a hat is given the same declaration by another vast demographic of the American citizens**.

The truth that nobody wants to admit is that Donald Trump is not the problem. Donald Trump *is* a problem, but Donald Trump has never been *the* problem. In such a weird way, I truly believe that **Donald Trump was a blessing in disguise**, and that **doesn't justify the violence, deaths, and atrocities that his speech, language, and policies are certainly responsible for**, but I'll explain **why his second administration has become the perfect opportunity** to **systemize positive change**.

Donald Trump represents nothing more than the pure rot that exists within the American empire's culture, and I make the distinction that this is the American empire's culture, **not American culture**.

American culture was born out of a beautiful blend of individual worlds who were subjugated by varying levels of oppression, and the cultural synthesis and evolution that grew out of those massive differences in lifestyles and customs became a dominant force on the global stage. **American culture** quite literally ***revolutionized the world*** and the way that we perceive art, fashion, science, technology, business, industry, philosophy, and **just about any other category you can define**, because **it called upon all of the world's greatest ground folk**.

American culture was born out of a promise to take the best aspects of all of the world's cultures and leave out all the bad, but also a promise that got so twisted before it even got a chance to fulfill itself, and that it forced its people to innovate in ways that went against the intentions of the empire, resulting in a raging inferno that persists *to this day*, in the form of a probably-once-organic culture war born out of forced drug experimentation on American citizens and the innovation that results from these sorts of inhumane psychology projects, that **became a weaponized and artificial effort by the empire itself when they realized how profitable it is to report on outrage that is so far away from you that it might as well not even exist to you**.

The American empire's culture was born out of *an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent*, obsessive, and bloodthirsty hunger for wealth *at all costs*, and the infrastructure they use to maintain this presence is *titanic*.

This isn't the result of one individual.

This isn't the result of Donald Trump.**Donald Trump is simply the doggiest-of-the-dogs in the dog-eat-dog world that we call the United States of America**, and **it is almost universally believed**, *even by his supporters*, that he is **a terrible human being with a severely destructive and opportunistically capitalistic killer instinct**.

They support him anyway because **he speaks to them in a way that most politicians don't, even if they know he is a walking lie**.

They support him because he represents something that everybody feels but nobody wants to admit.

This was was *never* a nation, and it never *will be* a nation, but a murderous empire that subjugated the multiple nations it created by force with the intention of chaos as a means to consolidate power and systemize control in order to maintain the mind-numbing vastness of the imaginary number that we call wealth and that we also all collectively uphold because we've been programmed to do so since the moment we were born.

The empire *was an illusion* that we have finally broken through.

> *"There's no time for fun and games, we're just fertile apes born to be slaves to technological chains and congressional gains… I never voted for you anyway you fuckin snake obstructionist hypocrite, miss me with that bullshit and on your penultimate day of life, when you enter the void, you get the word from your wife that she took… all the status all the cash all the gold, now you got nothing left, you die broke and alone, just like the rest of us. " -* ***Tantra Sweet***

You've always been free to do it. Folks around here been saying it for centuries.

In a year characterized by a cryptic document said to bring about the end of American democracy, **reality demonstrated that document to be the catalyst for starting the necessary conversation that we need to have until we reach our destination**, and that conversation revolves around a simple idea:

You are free to change the world.

Appalachian Spring

Appalachian Spring: A Declaration of Post-American Autonomy forms an ideological groundwork from a zillennial political outsider for **preserving the Appalachian cultural identity** first **through US statehood**, and **then through independent sovereignty when the empire becomes too big to manage and collapses in on itself like the Soviet Union or the Roman Empire**.

As an enthusiast of **free unconventional thinking**, I will be blending various elements of different ideologies, and I pray that brings discourse, but I truly believe that the confluence and amalgamation of these ideological elements will make sense to ground folk in an empireless North America, and specifically for the people of Appalachia.

The goal with this document as a whole is simple: officially kick off the **Appalachian statehood movement** by using literature to define and document the emerging Appalachian cultural identity in modern, **post-American** terms, and inspire what I've dubbed the **Appalachian Spring** movement, which **is currently developing across a growing network of alternative and traditional media personalities, including authors, independent organizations, digital journalists, entertainers, and social media influencers that have been collectively pushing forward a new Appalachian identity since roughly the mid-2010s.**

By giving a voice to this movement, and **providing a unique lens through which the fall of the empire is currently happening**, we Appalachian ground folk intend for this movement to **stand in solidarity with and inspire other existing movements across the empire** and **liberate all of us** by **spreading like an uncontrollable wildfire that the empire simply can't stomp out**.

I believe that **individual counties in the Appalachian region** from **non-West Virginia states** should **collectively push themselves and each other to join the State of West Virginia, which will rename itself the State of Appalachia**.

As counties in Appalachia combine all of our forces and **join West Virginia** to become **one Appalachia**, then we can then **lay a foundation** to **preserve our cultural heritage** and **give it a space to grow** and **evolve based on traditional influences** and **new, emerging voices**.

What follows is a mass rediscovery of **our shared cultural identity**, **molded by mountain life** and **once divided into disenfranchised portions** across the US states of **Kentucky**, **Tennessee, North Carolina**, **Virginia, South Carolina**, **Georgia**, **Alabama**, **Maryland**, **New York, Pennsylvania**, and **Ohio**, but ultimately **democratically reshaped** around **a cultural core of the former state of West Virginia**.

This statehood movement **creates the basis for a total revival of Appalachian culture** that would make even the *holiest* of backwoods snake church ladies blush. I believe that we can develop a **new economy** based on **tourism, art**, **creativity**, **y'allternative agriculture**, **neospirituality**, **cinema**, **transportation**, **fashion**, **ethical technology**, and **ethical defense**.

We can reinvent the wheel in these hollers and hills.

Through a decentralized collective effort, **Appalachian Spring is continuing a resurgence and preservation of endangered Appalachian traditions** like **building cabins**, **organizing** and **living in extended-family clans** of both biological and non-biokin, **carving bowls**, **blowing**

glass, plowing fields, **sewing quilts**, **gathering together** in ***real prayer*** **based around empathy** and **love for even the most "different" and "evil" people**, **standing in solidarity with fellow laborers to earn better employment rights**, **hunting** and **processing** and **cooking meats** in **our specific styles**, and so on and so forth.

Bluegrass music and **Appalachian folk** have become the lifeblood of **our unified nation**, which is **bound together by our love of our community and humanity at large**. Rock, electronic, country, funk, soul, jazz, and hip-hop artists throughout Appalachia like **geonovah** and **klique** carve out their own lane in movements stylized like *Appunklachia* or *Rappalachia*, and **a breaking of the norms that the empire set for Appalachia gives rise to incredible artistic experimentation and collaboration that's rooted in our Range.**

Living legends like **Dolly Parton**, **Sturgill Simpson**, **Tyler Childers**, **Sierra Ferrell**, and **Chris Stapleton**, highly-acclaimed authors and powerful queer voices like **Silas House** and the late-but-legacy-transcending **bell hooks**, a network of **emerging filmmakers** and **digital folklorists** like **Old Gods of Appalachia**, a network of cultural awareness podcasts like the folks at **Appodlachia** and similar shows, and **a wider community of creative and free-thinking individuals at all levels of our society** who are finding their own individual purposes, **continue to package and export the virtues and spooks** of ***our Appalachian culture*** to the world, **not the one the empire packaged and profiteered for us**.

I believe that in Appalachia, we are in a very good place to set the foundation for a new form of government that will define our lives when the empire crumbles. I would call it a **minarchy**, which is a **system of government with little top-down interference into the lives of ground folk**, **while also maintaining the infrastructure to institutionalize the prevention of illegal power-grabs**, but I don't think that really accurately describes what we're doing here.

We're going to rewrite the system in our image.

The Appalachian way of life is one that has been forgotten by many who have grown away from their rural roots, and I'm guilty of that as well. My paternal grandparents were farmers in an old holler way out in the sticks of Kentucky, and they raised my dad to **understand the values of hard work and country knowledge**. Of course, love can work in mysterious ways in such a hybridized place as Appalachia, and love brought my city-slicker mother and my hillbilly father together in southeastern **Ohio**, **a state that none of my biological family have ever lived in but contains so many people that *are* family**.

I contend that **we should collectively push** a **structured-yet-flexible** ideology of **Appalachianism**, **based on this hybridized rural-urban coexistence**. Of course, **this is ideological framework described through a simplistic lens**, and implementation of it on such a grand scale would be *quite* the effort, but I still find value in writing about it even if just to create positive discourse and inspire other new ideas.

By the mid-2020s, the loose and undefined concept of **Appalachianism**, which I define as a **metaphysical appreciation for** and a **collective dharma to defend the identity of Appalachia**, **her people**, **and her culture**, had truly taken hold in social media spaces. Seeing Appalachian identity references in public spaces became more common, and entire social media pages developed out of a **rediscovered appreciation for the culture**.

Appalachianism is a way for both older and younger generations to **honor and look to the lifestyles of *all* our founding figures** and **strive to incorporate their best practices into our own lives**, while **critically evaluating other traditions that society has come to understand may be harmful or ineffective**.

First, **we should systematically acknowledge that we are living on Indigenous land**, and **we should acknowledge the nations and their people who were displaced in that process**. As part of that, **automatic citizenship to all living members of affected Indigenous nations is critical**, and **we should go through as much reasonable effort as possible to redistribute public lands to the people of those nations if they wish to take it**, as well as **ensure that those folks have proper enfranchisement in the system** or **proper disengagement from the system**, for **they are the descendants of many of our founding figures who were wrongly and inhumanely displaced during a literal genocide that nobody talks about anymore**.

I often mention Cherokee people because they were the primary residents of the land that forms core Appalachia, but **in reality there were a number of nations that were affected by European settlement**, and **none of them should be forgotten in the process of honoring our Indigenous roots**. We should strive to **incorporate more aspects of their languages into our specific dialect**, **specifically regarding traditional place names**, as well as **other concepts that relate to that sort of traditional lifestyle that inspired the wider Appalachian way of living**.

As an aside and before we move on, I must add to that point above and say that **I have begun developing Appalachian English into a modernized**, **more flexible**, and **logical creole language more reflective of the makeup here**, and I may expand upon in another work if there is interest.

It's based on English, and it's called **Aapulaacyvn twan**. Twan, a term derived from an enforced rule of g-dropping in the language it refers to, **incorporates many elements from traditional Appalachian roots**, such as **the spelling out of the twang itself**, as well as many **Tsalagi and other Indigenous loanwords to refer to concepts like place**, **self**, **life**, **nature**, and **spirituality.**

Not forgotten is the **incorporation of African-American Vernacular English**, such as the **use of double negatives like in *ain't be*** and **the consolidation of multiple short words like in *finna***, or **the vast amount of general slang that the Black community has contributed to the wider American public's lexicon**.

Aapulaacyvn twan is a work in progress, but **I strive to find such a balance that it almost feels natural to anyone in the Appalachian nation who reads or writes it**.

An early example that I've written reads: **Thgowvrmnt uvthiimpiur antb liiken otfo^rus Aapulaacyvnfok**. It looks confusing at first, but the more I read it the more I see what **could be a natural evolution of language when we unify and had we not been systematically torn apart and traumatized as a people and as individual peoples**.

Back to balance… as Appalachian people, **we can strive to find a balance in life between urban and rural living**. It's not a secret that in the 21st century, cities are a critical piece of the infrastructure of any nation on the planet. It's also not a secret that Appalachia has a *substantial* urban population, depending on how you define the borders.

The **rural-urban hybrid lifestyle** is an important aspect of the Appalachian identity, and I believe it's going to be incredibly important moving forward. Just looking at a map I've created of the hypothetical boundaries, I can point out **Pittsburgh**, **Parkersburg**, **Morgantown**, **Charleston**, **Athens**, **Kyova tri-state**, **Tri-Cities**, **Roanoke**, **Greensboro**, **Lexington**, **Asheville**, **Knoxville**, **Chattanooga**, and **dozens** of other urban population centers scattered across the range.

My estimate, based on census data, is that Appalachia at its final border definition would have approximately **30-35 million citizens**, and **many of them would be living in decently-sized cities with modern ways of living**. The truth about urban Appalachians is that **they often have rural roots**, and many times **are still connected with those rural roots**. It's not uncommon in Appalachia to live in a major city, work in a major city, and **go to a family reunion in a holler off another holler somewhere deep in the sticks with no cell phone service**.

My personal belief is that in Appalachia **we could institute a hybrid rural-urban system**, where **city-states** are adapted versions of what we currently define as **metropolitan areas**: the actual **city** itself, and then **all of the suburbs and towns that may pop up around it**, or which may **connect it to another major city**.

For example, instead of multiple governments, **Kanawha County** and surrounding communities like **South Charleston** all merge into the **city-state** known as the **City of Charleston**. People who currently live in **South Charleston** technically live **outside** of the Charleston **city limits**, but they utilize the services and the infrastructure of the city of Charleston. We can't blame them for making the system work for them, but **it makes cities weaker as a result**, and **that spills over into the rural areas too**.

Rural areas can be defined as **folkland** and should essentially **be completely decentralized** and also **pay no taxes**. We should **respect the traditional Appalachians who want to disconnect from the wider political system and those folks should be treated in a similar way to uncontacted peoples by the state**.

Essentially, **live and let live**. The lifestyle of rural Appalachians can then **breathe** without fear of government overreach, and that lifestyle becomes based around **decentralized clans** and **off-grid community**.

This way, by moving into the jurisdiction of a **city-state**, a citizen can **opt in** to **paying their share of taxes for the modern community services and amenities they utilize on a daily basis**. If the people of a city-state want to design a modernized bus system in their city, or if they want to provide universal healthcare to all of their citizens, **they can have the freedom to do so through direct referendums and public town square meetings**.

By moving into the **Folkland** where there are minimal laws, other than those designed to **protect the rights of every other citizen and non-citizen of Appalachia**, a person can essentially **unplug** from the system and live their life on their own accord. Of course, **if one violates someone** or their property **in any way**, *anywhere* in Appalachia, **they should be held accountable by the state**.

As part of that accountability process, **Appalachians should focus on reform instead of punishment when it comes to the law and the consequences of breaking it**. Criminals can be given the opportunity to change, and there can be debates on how many chances are given.

I'm of the **same belief that Christ taught**, which states that ***anyone* can truly change their ways with enough effort**, and that *anyone* can be forgiven for even *the most heinous* of crimes **so long as they renounce and do what they can to rectify their actions**, **forgive themselves too**, and **make a dedicated and sustained commitment to being a better person**. It should go without saying that I believe **it is out of the state's jurisdiction to execute one of its citizens**, or **any other individual regardless of their status of statehood**.

As Appalachian people, **mental health knowledge can be fundamentally built into our society in a way that we understand it**, and **we should can strive to look for healing methods that make sense to folks who may not be experts on the rapid modern advancements in these studies and technologies.**

In other words, **we could utilize medical science to influence our understanding of mental health, but we shouldn't automatically use medications as a crutch in the way that the American big pharma industry does**. There is a lot of basis in methods like **cognitive behavioral therapy**, which doesn't automatically require medication to be effective.

We can strive to utilize basic understandings of psychology and **infuse it with a spiritual framework that better reflects the beliefs of the people of Appalachia as opposed to urban academics on the coasts who have never stepped foot in a Harlan holler**.

That means **giving weight to spiritual beliefs but grounding them in a reasonable and logical structure**, such as **spiritualizing behavioral therapy concepts and techniques into**

the context of Christ's teachings, for example. **Christ was a very compassionate man who absolutely radiated love for all people**, *even the people who crucified him*, and I think the compassion that Jesus showed **lost its meaning in the empire**'s version of Christianity, **which was more about control rather than love**.

We should take the best elements of Cherokee spirituality, which at its core believed **the spiritual world and physical world to be one entity**, and that **humans live in coexistence with the Earth and all her creatures**, and we should take the **best elements of Christianity**, like the doctrine that **love is patient** and **love is kind**, and the idioms about **rich men** and **camels in the Kingdom of God**, and we should take the **best elements of the home cultures of already-emerging Appalachian voices** from a **variety of places spanning the continents of Asia and Africa**, like the concept of **dharma**, which **originated in India millennia ago**, and 3500 years later the absorption of **this metaphysical knowledge by a cousin-lovin, club-foot, somethin' somethin', backwoods searcher and generational artist Tyler Childers led to a musical call-to-arms in the form of his 2025 magnum opus *Snipe Hunter***.

We can give weight to alternative medicine, like the **growing evidence to support the idea that natural herbs and compounds such as cannabis and psilocybin are spiritual tools that give you the opportunity to expand your awareness**, but **we should make known that this process is irreversible**, and **once you tear down the illusional power structure that you were born into**, **you can never return to the world you once saw**.

Much like *Snipe Hunter*, the **Range of Appalachian Ground Folk** can be a kaleidoscope in a way that **works for us**, because as human beings **we should fundamentally understand that all of us are spiritually connected by a force much greater than we are**, regardless of what you think about the origins of the universe and the status of any intelligent deity. It cannot be denied that, by and large, **there is a huge *verifiable knowledge gap* about the structure of our reality,** but as Appalachian people we've traditionally utilized a unique blend of **folk knowledge** that has been dismissed by academia. **I think we can modernize that folk knowledge and re-examine as much of it as possible with modern technology and paradigms**.

I imagine the **Range of Appalachian Ground Folk** could be a modernized **direct democracy** that utilized **ranked-choice voting** to ensure that we come the closest we can to reaching a *true* **people's consensus** through voting. A **national constitution** can be drafted through a foundation-laying series of **nationwide referendums** with **total transparency**, but also the **privacy of vote**. I'm not super knowledgeable, and I may be wrong in my scope, but based on my understanding, I believe this can be verified by assigning all **participating citizens** a **unique voter registration number that publicly conceals their identity**. Their votes become part of a **public digital ledger** that can be **verified by individuals** based on their voter registration number and a private **seed phrase** for individual accuracy verification, which would be done in a live and public ceremony. The public ledger gets entered into a **blockchain**, and the information

of the blockchain is **publicly accessible by citizens**. This ensures the **integrity of elections** while also maintaining a policy of **technology-in-moderation**.

As Appalachian people, **we should not strive to be Luddites**, but instead **we should opt for the responsible** and **ethical utilization of technology**, and part of that involves **repeatedly checking in with the vibe of the people to get a consensus and reaching a shared, objective reality**.

Appalachia has always been about individualism within a shared context of a haunted, bloody mountain range and its foothills, and **we should strive to keep it that way**. **We should encourage the freedom of thought**, and we should **encourage the sharing ofunconventional ideas,** and we should **encourage historically-marginalized voices and any voices that may ever *become* marginalized to speak up and give insight into how the system may be negatively affecting them**.

As Appalachian people, **we should strive to hear**, **listen to**, **understand**, and ***truly* contribute what we can to help *all* communities thrive in Appalachia**, and **not in the way that the empire wants you to believe you should**. It's not about glorification or pedestalization that borders on dehumanization. It's about **enforcing the idea that *all* of Appalachia and *all* of her folks have a seat at the supper table and a voice with which they can speak love to *all* of their kinfolk at the table**.

We Appalachian ground folk will never *be* at the table unless the table is structurally dismantled and we can live with a vast table, where the former table folks must come down from their thrones and live like regular people in societies that independently rediscover the best ways to make themselves function into the 21st century, *together*.

One of the main criticisms I've seen in proto-ideological conversations within this context is that Appalachia is a poor region, and I can't deny that fact. Appalachia commoners traditionally haven't ever had a lot of numerical wealth, but **the cool thing about Appalachia is that we *literally don't care if we are individually poor or not* as long as the state functions** in a way that is near-frictionless with **our own determinations**.**It really isn't that radical of an idea.**

Post-American nations can **form their own defense systems**, and the **nations can enter into agreements with other nations to defend each other should the situation ever arise**. The **nations can create economic alliances and agreements that work for everybody involved** and not the interests of the board of directors of the corporate entity that is the United States of America.

The nations can have a **free travel zone** like the European Union. **Communication infrastructure becomes embedded** within this **decentralized**, **smart-contract based federation,** and services like the Internet **officially become repurposed as public utilities** that can either be further nationalized individually or **a shared common space among all of global**

society, ***not*** **a cash cow being propped up by the data they milk from the regular humans they perceive as cattle**.

We can still use a common currency, *or* **nations can choose to mint their own traditional currencies**, *or* **any combination can exist of nations shifting into modernized and evolving crypto-currency based economies**.

In this scenario where the United States restructures itself or falls entirely and new nations arise out of its ashes, **I imagine that New York City's successor micronation would indeed remain the financial center of the traditional west**, and **I imagine that the United States dollar would not disappear**, **but would tether to Bitcoin**, which has a limited supply and is more likely to remain stable once it reaches mass widespread adoption in daily life and then subsequently mints its final coin in the not-so-distant future.

I also imagine that **traditional concepts like the global east and the global west cease to exist** in a post-American world. Much like news of the American revolution spread around the world and inspired revolutions in countless absolute monarchies, **I believe that Appalachian Spring could have the *potential* to enact widespread change around the world**.

It may be naive to say that the Chinese table folks' authority in China can be challenged by regular Chinese ground folks, but **250 years ago it would be naive to say that a bunch of religious nutjobs on contested *savage* land an ocean away could overthrow their oppressive parent regime on a path to transforming the entire trajectory of human history to the scale that they did.**

The United States was never the great experiment. The United States **was the lab run by a rotating door of sociopathic madmen**, until **the subjects rose up and took their real power and performed the *real* great sociopolitical experiments** to improve **all of humanity**.

Instead of being **gridlocked in imperial**, **ideological warfare**, **post-Americans can develop truly unique modernized systems of government and cultures based on *real identities* rather than the flag of a murderous empire**.

When the **Great Lakes nation**, and the **New England nation**, and **northeast megalopolis city-state-nation**, and the **Black coast nation,** and the **Texas nation**, and the **Ozark nation**, and the **Ohio Valley nation**, and the **Iowa plains nation**, and the **decentralized Indigenous nations**, and the **Deseret nation**, and the **Idaho nation**, and the **southwestern nation**, and the **Pacific nation**, and the **Denali nation**, and the **Appalachian nation**, all **rise up** and ***take our power into our own collective hands***, we can **restructure the mess those table folk created** into a **federation** of **sovereign nations** who **share some customs *but also vary in others***, and we could, as a Post-American Union, **logically** and **autonomously re-border** or ***de-border*** **places** that were known at the time of writing this as the sovereign nations of the **United States**, **Canada, Mexico**, **Cuba**, **Haiti**, the **Dominican Republic**, and **various other nations and**

islands in the Caribbean and Central America, as well as the US territories of Puerto Rico and those in the Pacific Islands, and arguably down into **South America** if nations there are open to joining **a system constructed with fairness as a doctrine**, **not a bargaining chip**.

We can maintain that **each nation has their own sovereignty** to **enact our own laws** and **customs as *we see fit***. Whether it comes to culture wars or economic schools of thought, *inevitable* is a **dissolution of the United States** as an entity, and *hopeful I remain* for the **redrafting of a *dull* but structurally-solid, politically-neutral but grounded in human rights, and less imagery-laden constitution**, which transforms America into what it always said it set out to be as a troubled teen: **a land by and for the American peoples**, who are ***not one* but *many who make one*, *when* the time calls for it**.

The PAU can be effective as a federation of similar, albeit **different nations**, and **it is the *only* way to ensure that *our* American ethos actually survives and leaves a lasting legacy on the world**. Nations within the PAU can function as one when necessary, but function as many when that is also necessary, and the truth is that **both of these scenarios are okay to understand to be true**.

Mesopotamian culture influenced the Egyptian culture that came after it, which **helped Greek culture influence the Roman culture that came after it**, and **Roman culture influenced various Mediterranean cultures that arose during Rome's long and gradual decline**, and **in the muddy ashes of Roman imperial rule rose a British culture that eventually revolutionized language and destabilized global society**, which led to a **rediscovered appreciation for the concept of a torturous empire itself in the form of the new *United* States of America attempting to force a cultural identity based in Roman fear onto its inhabitants**.

In the same way, **American culture will influence the cultures that come after it**.

It will influence a **tech-utopian visionary society on the west coast**, fueled by the promises of financial gain and what could be the betterment of humanity through technological advancement.

It will influence a **theocracy** based in an unconventional American religion **in the deserts of Utah and surrounding areas**, fueled by a craving for moral authority and order in society, and bound to a land that their ancestors defended from the empire.

It will influence a **progressive** and **social democracy in the northeast**, fueled by the promise of prosperity for all people based on an institutional appreciation for the expansion of knowledge and social awareness.

It will influence an **oil-based economy in the south central** that has **become a fork of the tech-utopian vision**, fueled by the promises of cryptocurrency and other similar emerging

technologies.

It will influence a **tourism and service based economy in the deep south which is highly religious, fairly conservative, and has substantial Black representation in government**, fueled by a revival that reshapes the major Abrahamic religions into a coexisting system based on love for all people.

It will influence a **supply-chain and shipping logistics economy in the Great Lakes nation**, which has a substantial modern manufacturing sector reflective of the Rust Belt, and welcomes immigrants with open arms, fueled by a growing demand for specialized labor and institutional academia.

It will influence the **capital of western finance, a micronation where NYC and its surrounding megalopolis consolidate** into a Singapore or Hong Kong-style city, and world cultures can continue to blend, merge, clash, and evolve, based on the promises of global interconnectivity and empathy through gained understanding of different types of people.

It will influence **decentralized Indigenous lands** centered around a combination of rural living, tourism, and business and shipping logistics, where the surviving nations of the Indigenocide can live on lands that they own and where they can define their own laws that are rooted in what remain of their traditional customs instead of the customs of the European-American empire.

It will influence a **religious, yet moderate midwest nation** with a farming and shipping economy that grants them sustainability, based on the promises of the economic inevitability of hunger and the need for a supplier of food.

It will influence a **rising nation of mountain folk** with a fiercely independent-but-community-oriented arts, tourism, shipping, and agricultural economy, *bound* to the *ground* and *to the land* by a *spiritual force* that *many of them don't understand yet*, but are *open to discovering,* because they *feel it* in the *depths of their soul,* and they *know* that it is a *real force* grounded in something much bigger than themselves.

The cool thing about this is that we can have this conversations without looking at it through an American perspective. **We can take this best ideals from the ethos that the US claimed to believe in, and *actually make them happen*** in a new, modernized system of government that *understands* the complexities of modern technology and seeks to utilize it efficiently.

I imagine a 21st century Appalachia as something similar to **Switzerland**. Switzerland is also **landlocked**, **somewhat homogenous on the surface** but not so much once you go digging, and **situated directly around a massive mountain range** running through Europe that serves as a popular tourist destination. They strongly believe in **digital privacy laws**, and they have a **powerful banking system** which has generated them a ton of wealth over the course of their

nation's history. They maintain an **international policy of no conflict**, they maintain a **peaceful and civil society**, and they have an **incredible standard of living**.

In other words, **Switzerland is the Appalachia that won**. They're *not* identical, so you can say there were other factors involved in the process, but the similarities are there.

Instead of being the nation that got **stomped down by the government of the empire** and forced to buy into its rigged economic system, **Switzerland *created* a system that *worked for its people* and *not just its rulers***.

We can make sure that people have true personal liberty and freedom from government and societal oppression in Appalachia. We can make sure that we have a **fair economy that puts the people above all else**. Work ethic is one of the strongest pillars of the Appalachian identity, and I believe that **it is in our nature to work hard and to work smart**.

We've *never* been given the *actual* chance to take matters into our own hands as a people and rule ourselves as **one people**. We've been **artificially separated** by **carefully-drawn borders** and **our interests have been squashed down** by the **non-Appalachian elites *within* our own states**.

I call on the people of Appalachia, and I call on the people of any other currently-undefined quantity of cultural nations that make up the United States, and I call on the citizens of the rest of the nations of the world who may have financial interests in the United States…

Do what is right.

Dissolve the empire and **destroy its psychological warfare infrastructure forever.**

Let us rebuild it **in our image**, *the ground folks*… **the regular people who you've exploited since the beginning** of this *nation* you tried to create.

Give the American peoples our individual sovereignties back, and **let us rectify the mess that the table folks created and maintained in the name of eternal power and capital expansion**.

Let our nations form our own alliances and **unify in a way that makes sense for the people of those nations**, so that we can **redesign our governments in an interconnected way that prioritizes true fairness**, *not* the imperial definition of fairness that either doesn't do enough to maintain real justice, or overcompensates in a way that angers people… **both of which are by design**.

When the state propaganda infrastructure that is responsible for our eternal American culture war evaporates, the culture war itself will gradually evaporate as well, and **we as post-Americans can rediscover** what we were always told were **the exceptional qualities of America** but **have never seen implemented in our lifetimes.**

Instead of **division through authority**, we need **unity through dissolution**.

So again, I call on you to take action in **whatever peaceful way** you decide is necessary to enacting this change.

Massive paradigm shifts and societal transformation creep along a narrow path like an elderly tortoise, chugging along and doubting whether or not it has the ability to reach its destination before the hare… **but as we all know**, **the tortoise wins**, because **the hare expends its energy too quickly and collapses in exhaustion**.

The American peoples are exhausted, but **the American empire is exhausted too**, and they're digging themselves deeper and deeper into the hole **every day**…

…so I contend that change does happen slowly… slowly, and ***then all at once***.

> *"I'd howl like a dawg, I'd sound like a real one, I'd burn like a candle and grin in your face." -*
>
> ***Tyler Childers***

You are free to change the world.

- unc plug -

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Appalachian Spring - A Declaration of Post-American Autonomy

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